AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A product design support system that supports a user in designing a product, said system comprising:

storage means for storing information about products; and

processing means for receiving a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and for selectively extracting said information about said products from said storage means based on compatibility with said specification of said product to be designed,

said storage means including:

parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,

parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,

product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and

product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means, and

said processing means including:

specification acquisition means which acquires specification information designating said specification of said product to be designed,

compatible-product-information extraction means which extracts from said storage means said information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information acquired by said specification acquisition means and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said products compatible with said specification, and

information transmission means which transmits information extracted by said compatible-product-information extraction means to a user terminal of said user,

wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Currently Amended) The product design support system according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein said compatible-product-information extraction means

selects product information on said products having functions designated by said specification information acquired by said specification acquisition means, and parts information on parts to be constituting elements of said products from said storage means,

executes simulation to discriminate whether a product which is obtained by replacing constituting elements of said products indicated by said selected product information is compatible with said specification designated by said specification information or not, and

extracts information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said products compatible with said specification based on results of said simulation.

4. (Currently Amended) The product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 1,

~~said storage means including:~~

~~parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,~~

~~parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,~~

~~product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and~~

~~product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means; and~~

said processing means further including:

acquisition means which acquires said parts information, said product information, said parts image information, and said product image information, and

update means which updates information stored in said storage means based on said information acquired by said acquisition means[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 1, said storage means ~~further~~ comprising:

~~parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product;~~

~~parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means;~~

~~product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means;~~

~~product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means;~~

restriction information storage means which stores information on a design restriction in product designing; and

achievement information storage means which stores achievement information on characteristics of said products stored in said product-information storage means[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product~~.

6. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 5, wherein said achievement information includes physical property values of said products and manufacturing costs of said products.

7. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 5, said processing means further comprising simulation means which simulates characteristics of said product to be designed based on said achievement information stored in said achievement information storage means.

8. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 7, said processing means further comprising simulation information transmission means which transmits simulation information on results of simulation done by said simulation means to a user terminal of said user.

9. (Currently Amended) The product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 1,

~~said storage means comprising:~~

~~parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,~~

~~parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,~~

~~product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and~~

~~product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means; and~~

said processing means <u>further</u> comprising:

product specifying means which allows said user to specify a predetermined product from said products stored in said product-information storage means, and

product-information providing means which transmits at least one of said product information stored in said product-information storage means and said product image information stored in said product-image-information storage means, for said product specified by said product specifying means, to a user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted product-related information[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages said information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

10. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 9, wherein said product image information stored in said product-image-information storage means is stored in association with said product information stored in said product-information storage means and said parts image information stored in said parts-image-information storage means.

11. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 9, wherein said product specifying means can specify a plurality of products from said products stored in said product-information storage means.

12. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 9, said processing means further comprising:

parts specifying means which allows said user to specify a predetermined part from said parts constituting said product specified by said product specifying means; and

parts-information providing means which transmits at least one of said parts information stored in said parts-information storage means and said parts image information stored in said parts-image-information storage means, for said part specified by said parts specifying means, to said user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted parts-related information.

13. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 9, said storage means further comprising restriction information storage means which stores information on a design restriction in product designing.

14. (Previously Presented) The product design support system according to claim 5, said storage means further comprising peculiar restriction information storage means which stores information on a peculiar restriction on a predetermined product in product designing.

15. (Currently Amended) The product design support system according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein said product is an electric circuit,

said product information stored in said product-information storage means includes a parts table of said electric circuit, and

said product image information stored in said product-image-information storage means includes a circuit diagram.

16. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 1, said system comprising:

processing means for receiving a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and for selectively extracting information about products based on compatibility with said specification of said product to be designed,

said processing means comprising:

specification acquisition means which acquires specification information designating said specification of said product to be designed;

compatible-product-information extraction means which

connects to an external storage device including a parts-information storage section which stores parts information on parts constituting a product, a parts-image-information

storage section which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage section, a product-information storage section which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage section, and a product-image-information storage section which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage section, and

extracts from said external storage device information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information acquired by said specification acquisition means and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said product compatible with said specification; and

information transmission means which transmits information extracted by said compatible-product-information extraction means to an external user terminal of said user,

wherein said system collectively manages said information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.

17. (Currently Amended) The product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim [[1]] 16, said processing means further comprising:

~~compatible-product-information extraction~~ acquisition means which ~~extracts~~ acquires, from [[an]] said external storage device ~~including a parts-information storage section which stores parts information on parts constituting a product, a parts-image-information storage section which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage section, a product-information storage section which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage section, and a product-image-information storage section which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage section~~, said parts information, said product information, said parts image information, and said product image information; and

update means which updates information stored in said external storage device based on said information acquired by said acquisition means[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages said information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The product design support system that supports a user in designing a product according to claim [[1]] 16, said processing means further comprising:

       product specifying means which allows said user to specify a predetermined product from said products stored in ~~an external~~ said product-information storage ~~device that stores product information on a product to be formed by parts~~ section; and

       product-information providing means which transmits at least one of said product information stored in said ~~external~~ product-information storage ~~device~~ section and said product image information stored in ~~an external~~ said product-image-information storage ~~device that stores product image information of said products stored in said external product-information storage device~~ section, for said product specified by said product specifying means, to [[an]] said external user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted product-related information[[,]] ~~wherein said system collectively manages said information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product~~.

19. (Currently Amended) A product design support method that supports a user in designing a product, said method comprising:

       a storage step of storing information about products;

       a receiving step of receiving a predetermined specification of a product to be designed; and

       an extraction step of selectively extracting said information about said products based on compatibility with said specification of said product to be designed,

       said storage step including:

          a parts-information storage step of storing parts information on parts constituting a product,

          a parts-image-information storage step of storing parts image information on said parts stored at said parts-information storage step,

          a product-information storage step of storing product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored at said parts-information storage step, and

          a product-image-information storage step of storing product image information on said products stored at said product-information storage step;

       said receiving step including:

a specification acquisition step of acquiring specification information designating said specification of said product to be designed; and

said extraction step including:

a compatible-product-information extraction step of extracting information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information acquired at said specification acquisition step and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said products compatible with said specification;

said method further comprising:

an information transmission step of transmitting information extracted at said compatible-product-information extraction step to a user terminal of said user,

wherein information on said product to be designed is collectively managed to facilitate designing of said product.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) The product design support method according to claim [[20]] 19, wherein said compatible-product-information extraction step comprises:

selecting product information on said products having functions designated by said specification information acquired at said specification acquisition step and parts information on parts to be constituting elements of said products,

executing simulation to discriminate whether a product which is obtained by replacing constituting elements of said products indicated by said selected product information is compatible with said specification designated by said specification information or not, and

extracting information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said products compatible with said specification based on results of said simulation.

22. (Currently Amended) The product design support method that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 19,

said storage step including:

a parts-information storage step of storing parts information on parts constituting a product,

~~a parts-image-information-storage step of storing parts image information on said parts stored at said parts-information storage step,~~

~~a product-information storage step of storing product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored at said parts-information storage step, and~~

~~a product-image-information storage step of storing product image information on said products stored at said product-information storage step;~~

said method further comprising:

an acquisition step of acquiring said parts information, said product information, said parts image information, and said product image information; and

an update step of updating information stored at said storage step based on said information acquired at said acquisition step[[,]]

~~wherein information on said product to be designed is collectively managed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

23. (Currently Amended) The product design support method that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 19, said storage step <u>further</u> comprising:

~~a parts-information storage step of storing parts information on parts constituting a product;~~

~~a parts-image-information-storage step of storing parts image information on said parts stored at said parts-information storage step;~~

~~a product-information storage step of storing product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored at said parts-information storage step;~~

~~a product-image-information storage step of storing product image information on said products stored at said product-information storage step;~~

a restriction information storage step of storing information on a design restriction in product designing; and

an achievement information storage step of storing achievement information on characteristics of said products stored at said product-information storage step[[,]]

~~wherein information on said product to be designed is collectively managed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

24. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 23, wherein said achievement information includes physical property values of said products and manufacturing costs of said products.

25. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 23, further including a simulation step of simulating characteristics of said product to be designed based on said achievement information stored at said achievement information storage step.

26. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 25, further including a simulation information transmission step of transmitting simulation information on results of simulation done at said simulation step to a user terminal of said user.

27. (Currently Amended) The product design support method that supports a user in designing a product according to claim 19, ~~said storage step comprising:~~

~~a parts-information storage step of storing parts information on parts constituting a product,~~

~~a parts-image-information storage step of storing parts image information on said parts stored at said parts-information storage step,~~

~~a product-information storage step of storing product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored at said parts-information storage step, and~~

~~a product-image-information storage step of storing product image information on said products stored at said product-information storage step;~~

said method further comprising:

a product specifying step of allowing said user to specify a predetermined product from said products stored at said product-information storage step; and

a product-information providing step of transmitting at least one of said product information stored at said product-information storage step and said product image information stored at said product-image-information storage step, for said product specified at said product specifying step, to a user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted product-related information[[,]]

~~wherein information on said product to be designed is collectively managed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

28. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 27, wherein said product image information stored at said product-image-information storage step is stored in association with said product information stored at said product-information storage step and said parts image information stored at said parts-image-information storage step.

29. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 27, wherein said product specifying step comprises:

specifying a plurality of products from said products stored at said product-information storage step.

30. (Currently Amended) The product design support method according to claim 27, further including:

a parts specifying step of allowing said user to specify a predetermined part from parts constituting said product specified at said product specifying step; and

a parts-information providing step of transmitting at least one of said parts information stored at said parts-information storage step [[or]] and said parts image information stored at said parts-image-information storage step, for said part specified at said parts specifying step, to said user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted parts-related information.

31. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 27, said storage step further including a restriction information storage step of storing information on a design restriction in product designing.

32. (Previously Presented) The product design support method according to claim 23, said storage step further including a peculiar restriction information storage step of storing information on a peculiar restriction on a predetermined product in product designing.

33. (Currently Amended) The product design support method according to claim [[20]] 19, wherein said product is an electric circuit,

said product information stored at said product-information storage step includes a parts table of said electric circuit, and

said product image information stored at said product-image-information storage step includes a circuit diagram.

34. (Currently Amended) A program for allowing a computer to function as a product design support system that supports a user in designing a product, said system comprising:

storage means for storing information about products; and

processing means for receiving a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and for selectively extracting said information about said products from said storage means based on compatibility with said specification of said product to be designed,

said storage means including:

parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,

parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,

product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and

product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means; and

said processing means including:

specification acquisition means which acquires specification information designating said specification of said product to be designed,

compatible-product-information extraction means which extracts from said storage means information on said products compatible with said specification designated by said specification information acquired by said specification acquisition means and/or information on parts to be constituting elements of said products compatible with said specification, and

information transmission means which transmits information extracted by said compatible-product-information extraction means to a user terminal of said user,

wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.

35. (Canceled).

36. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim [[31]] 34 for allowing said computer to function as a product design support system that supports a user in designing a product,

said storage means including:

parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,

parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,

product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and

product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means; and

said processing means <u>further</u> including:

acquisition means which acquires said parts information, said product information, said parts image information, and said product image information, and

update means which updates information stored in said storage means based on said information acquired by said acquisition means[[,]]

wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.

37. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim [[31]] <u>34</u> for allowing said computer to function as a product design support system that supports a user in designing a product and said storage means <u>further</u> comprises:

parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product;

parts-image-information storage means which stores parts image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means;

product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means;

product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means;

restriction information storage means which stores information on a design restriction in product designing; and

achievement information storage means which stores achievement information on characteristics of said products stored in said product-information storage means[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

38. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim [[31]] 34 for allowing said computer to function as a product design support system that supports a user in designing a product,

~~said storage means comprising:~~

~~parts-information storage means which stores parts information on parts constituting a product,~~

~~parts-image-information storage means which stores parts-image information on said parts stored in said parts-information storage means,~~

~~product-information storage means which stores product information on said products, said products formed by said parts stored in said parts-information storage means, and~~

~~product-image-information storage means which stores product image information on said products stored in said product-information storage means; and~~

said processing means further comprising:

    product specifying means which allows said user to specify a predetermined product from said products stored in said product-information storage means, and

    product-information providing means which transmits at least one of said product information stored in said product-information storage means and said product image information stored in said product-image-information storage means, for said product specified by said product specifying means, to a user terminal of said user to provide said user with said transmitted product-related information[[,]]

~~wherein said system collectively manages information on said product to be designed to facilitate designing of said product.~~

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